DEWAN-PRESIDENT'S STATEMENT RE : FOOD SITUATION.

PRESIDENT : As has been customary ever since the food crisis has begun, I feel it my duty to place before this honourable House the steps taken by Government in order to cope with the very difficult situation with which this State has been and is confronted—and I am deliberately using the word 'is confronted'—because I do not desire honourable members here or the public outside to run away with the impression that the crisis has passed or even is passing. After I have made my observations, honourable members will see exactly what our position is. Honourable members will forgive me if I begin by setting out certain figures which will speak for themselves. From November 1943 up to October 1944, the allotments which have been made to Travancore and Cochin are as follows :—Rice from Orissa that is to come *via* Madras—in other words, Madras Presidency has been informed by the Government of India that they expect Madras Government to supply us with 30,000 tons and that they will make good that quantity to Madras by supplying them from Orissa. We are not yet quite aware of what answer has been furnished by the Madras Government to this proposal. We have not yet been officially told whether the Madras Government have agreed to supply the 30,000 tons to Travancore. Such supply, as I have endeavoured to point out more than once would be both expedient and economical. Instead of our having to get rice, wheat, bajra and millet from Kashmir, Bahawalpur and the Punjab, if Madras could supply us and then get what it supplies to us from other sources, that would be the best method. But the Madras Government is a separate Government working under its own constitution under the Government of India Act and the limits within which the Government of India can operate are fairly well-known, although quite recently the action taken by Field-Marshal Lord Wavell, the present Viceroy of India, in regard to Bengal, Sind and the Punjab has been of a most heartening character.

Now, out of the 30,000 tons allotted from Orissa which is to come *via* Madras, Travancore's share is 24,000 tons. From Baluchistan we get 6,400 tons. From Sind we get 72,800 tons, from the Punjab 6,400 tons, from Coorg 4,800 tons and from Bahawalpur 4,000 tons and from Kashmir, 1,600 tons. The total, therefore, is 120,000 tons of rice allotted to us from November 1943 to October 1944. Although it will be noticed that the bulk of the rice comes from Sind, it was found practically impossible to get that rice transported from Sind by railway because in order to enable Sind rice to come to Trivandrum, it has to go from Karachi or Hyderabad to Lahore, from Lahore to Delhi, from Delhi to Nagpur and to Madras, from Madras to Quilon or Cochin and from Cochin or Quilon to Trivandrum. So, attempts have been made and are being made to

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get as much as possible of those supplies by sea and by canal. So far as the sea is concerned, negotiations are practically complete. I shall not today dogmatise further than that negotiations have been completed. Negotiations are practically completed with a very well-known firm of all-India importance, a steam navigation company, for the purpose of giving certain vessels which will bring the grain direct from Karachi not only to Cochin, but to Alleppey, Quilon and Trivandrum. I am also glad to say that the Excise Commissioner has succeeded in persuading a very well-known merchant and shipping agent in Tuticorin to give us some boats for the purpose. Our own schooners and crafts are now loading rice in Cochin to be brought to this State and other boats also are being commandeered. I may further add that the Government of India have had their pointed attention drawn to this very serious handicap. Today quite a substantial share of our foodstuffs is lying either at the wharf at Karachi or in Cochin. The result is that there is bound to be a certain amount of theft, wastage and damage at the wharf. There is bound to be a certain amount of damage on the way if they are to come in small *vallams* and therefore it is to the advantage of everybody—including the Government of India which may have to reimburse us if this rice goes away—that ocean going craft bring the rice as directly as possible from Karachi to Trivandrum. Although the full details cannot be published just now for reasons not unconnected with the war, I am glad to say that the Government of India have consented to help us very greatly in the transport of rice by sea from Karachi to Trivandrum. Just this morning I have received news of a most encouraging character. When the time is ripe for publishing it, when the thing begins to operate and when there is no danger in the publication of the details, it will be published. But I can assure the honourable members that the problem is being solved with the active concurrence of the Government of India.

In regard to rice from Baluchistan, Bahawalpur, the Punjab and Kashmir, transport by rail is perhaps the only way possible. It is not entirely without hope that I say that even now this Government have not ceased their efforts in making the Government of India realise that it would be better for Bahawalpur and the Punjab to supply the Central Provinces, for instance, and the Central Provinces to supply Madras, and for Madras, to supply us. If the Government of India will kindly make up their mind to tell the Central Provinces and Madras to send us their supply of rice which in turn will be reimbursed to them, it will be an advantage. That is so far as rice is concerned.

So far as millets are concerned—and I want the honourable members to mark these figures—the supply is as follows. Bahawalpur 18,400 tons; Khairpur (a place in the Punjab) 2,400 tons and the Punjab 4,000 tons. So in all we are to get 24,800 tons.

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Maize.—Punjab States 5,600 tons and the Punjab 4,000 tons. It may be asked what Travancore can do with maize. The answer is, "what can Travancore do if it does not even get maize?" That is why I am reading these figures to the honourable members and that is why the Government have accepted to take maize, a total of about 9,600 tons, from the Punjab States.

Pulses from Hyderabad, 8,000 tons.

Mealie Samp (maize, broken rice size) from overseas—*i. e.*, from Australia and Africa—we are to get 4,000 tons.

Barley from Persian Gulf 1,600 tons.

Milk and milk products. 1,10,000 lbs. In this connection, I am very glad to pay a tribute of homage to the Government of India and to the Director-General of the Indian Medical Services. I am glad to announce to this House that so far as milk and milk products which are agreed to be supplied from South Africa to India, a large proportion, more than half of it, is devoted to Travancore, so that it will be seen that the utilisation of the milk and milk products for nursing and expectant mothers in the various hospitals may do a great deal to strengthen the stamina of the people which on account of the troubles which they have passed through is getting to be less and less.

Of the Australian wheat, we are to get 12,658 tons. This is our food position from November 1943 to October 1944. In other words, out of a total of about 210,000 tons, 120,000 tons alone are rice. The rest range from millets, maize, pulses, mealie samp, barley, milk and wheat.

Now it is therefore necessary that we in Travancore should make up our minds to substitute as far as possible other kinds of food grains instead of rice. I have just received a communication to this effect: "The normal deficit of Travancore and Cochin in rice is 4,50,000 tons a year." The quotas allotted to these two States for the year from November 1943 to October 1944 are roughly about 2,00,000 tons. That is, we are going to get little less than one half of our total requirements, from outside. And that is the utmost. In addition, the following rabi grains are likely to be received—about 75,000 tons of wheat and pulses. There is, therefore, a deficit of nearly 2,00,000 tons. I would draw the attention of the honourable members to this sentence. "The Government of India are aware that the demand of Travancore and Cochin is chiefly for rice and will do whatever they can to increase the present rice allotment to the States. On present indications, the best that can be hoped for is an additional quota of about 20,000 to 40,000 tons which will reduce the deficit to 150,000 or 170,000 tons. This fact that there is a deficit of the order of 150,000 tons, which cannot be supplied in rice, must be faced by the State Government and the people made acquainted with the position so that they may

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realise that they will have to go without the full amount of the grain that is needed unless they are prepared to eat substitute food grains instead of rice."

There is of course considerable prejudice to be overcome. People are inclined to be conservative in the matter of food and are sometimes even prepared to go with less than the amount that they usually take rather than take unfamiliar food. Then follow the words equally important :—

> "The Director-General of the Indian Medical Services has recently visited the States of Travancore and Cochin and has recorded his impressions which show that if progressive deterioration in the health of the inhabitants of Travancore and Cochin is to be avoided, a change in the dieting system is imperative. While it is deplorable from the point of view of administration that foodgrains of a kind which people want are not available in sufficient quantities, it is not so regrettable from that of nutrition, since it means that people will be turning from rice to another grain superior in nutritive value and will, therefore, be getting nearer to a balanced diet. If this change be permanent, the scarcity in Travancore and Cochin will not be without its favourable side. It is, however, essential that, firstly, the Government of Travancore and Cochin should themselves realise that it is impossible to meet their requirements in rice and, secondly, that they do everything possible to encourage the use of substitute foodgrains for rice to combat the conservatism of even the educated classes to a change of diet."

I may mention here that I received an application from the University Students' Hostel some three days ago that an exception should be made in their case, that wheat or pulses should not be supplied to them but only rice as they are apparently attending to very heavy brain-exhausting labour. If the students do not set an example to the State in this matter, no body else will.

> "The chief substitutes for rice which have been recommended by the Director-General of the Indian Medical Services are wheat, millets and pulses. All these grains have a higher protein content than rice. In addition an extension of the cultivation of green vegetables wherever possible, should be encouraged. The Government of India understand that the reluctance to the taking of bajra or wheat as substitutes for rice is gradually disappearing and consider that this tendency should be encouraged as much as possible."

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"The figures given in paragraph 2 of this letter will show that on the supplies already arranged, or likely to be arranged shortly, Travancore and Cochin are in deficit to the extent of about 150,000 tons. On present expectations it is impossible to meet any portion of this deficit in rice but there is a good prospect of further supplies of wheat, millets, bajra and gram being made available. Before making an actual allotment the Government of India would like to know what further quantities of these foodgrains the Travancore and Cochin Governments would like to be allotted to them, keeping in mind the facts that these foodgrains are richer in protein content than rice, that fairly large supplies can be allotted immediately, that more rice is not likely to be available and that the alternative, if the supplies of these grains are refused, is that the health of the people of Travancore and Cochin is likely to deteriorate further."

Now, it is impossible to be clearer than that, and we cannot possibly take objection to the peremptory character of that letter, because I am in a position to assure this honourable House that from the Viceroy downwards, everybody has been bestowing earnest personal attention on this question of supplying Travancore and Cochin with rice to the largest extent possible. That they failed is not their mistake; that they cannot supply more to us of rice, is a matter which is beyond controversy and therefore it behoves us immediately to take such steps as appear to be necessary in order to familiarise the people with the modes of cooking and of use of those other grains.

I may add a word of personal experience. For many months now I have practically given up the use of rice. I am using wheat and, to a certain extent, other things which are frightening to the people such as bajra, and I have found, personally speaking, no deleterious or injurious consequences. I am aware, however, that the cooking of bajra is a difficult business. It requires more firewood; it requires more thorough cooking; but what is the alternative? We have quite recently made an experiment. The Indian Tea Market Expansion Board has at its disposal a sum of Rs. 50 lakhs per year for advertisement purposes, *viz.*, for advertising in India and elsewhere the use and the benefit of tea and the importance of consuming tea in larger and larger quantities. Honourable members may have noticed those beaming smiles that look upon us through the pages of the newspapers, of housewives being thoroughly contented because they have excess of tea. That advertisement has apparently been of some use, because they say as a result of that, the sale of tea has increased considerably. But they are also given permission to use other articles by way of adjuncts to tea—*bajee*, *uppumavu* and *dosai*. I have succeeded in getting the Tea Market Expansion Board establish canteens at all industrial centres. There is one centre especially next to the P.W.D.

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Workshops in Trivandrum, another near the Rubber Factory, another in Quilon. There will be canteens established in Kottayam, Alwaye and Alleppey where they will be preparing various things out of bajra, wheat, millet and gram and sell them to people, to factory workers and other workers—at cheap rates. But that is only touching the fringe of the problem. Every honourable member of this House, every member of the public of Travancore has, until the crisis passes, to make up his or her mind to be a kind of missionary for the purpose of preaching "eat less rice and more of other foodgrains." I have sought to say elsewhere, I have made it clear in Delhi—that I do consider that this shortage from which we are suffering, these difficulties of ours, will continue for the next five, six or seven years. I do not know whether honourable members have ever read what I have said elsewhere which has not been contradicted by anybody, that in order to re-cultivate the fields of Burma even after the conquest of Burma, the labouring population, which has fled from Burma and is now scattered all over India and elsewhere has to be taken back. If Indian labour is to go back to Burma, the question of their political and economic status in a self-governing Burma will have to be decided. The matter has been pending solution for 10 years and even assuming that dynamic personalities will be grappling with the problem in less than two years, after the conquest of Burma, after they go back and cultivate fields in Burma, they will have to rebuild all the boats which are being bombed now. All the godowns, granaries and many of the factories are all blown up. All the boats are either commandeered or being destroyed, day in and day out. As readers will remember, all the rice in Burma comes to the interior by boats through Akyab. To re-establish that trade will take another three years and at the end of that, Burma will prefer to say that they will supply China instead of India because they are akin to each other. Not only that—the famine belt of China is much more extensive. It is more extensive than in India. Thirty to forty million people are dying of starvation there whereas it is only twenty millions here. Therefore that international consideration may induce Burma to supply their rice to China rather than to India. Travancore and Cochin will have to take note of these international problems. We have been drawn into international maelstrom, whether we like it or not. We must realise that for the next five, six or seven years this problem of rice supply and the feeding of the people is an over-head problem and will have to be met in four ways; firstly, by intensive cultivation; secondly, by extension as far as possible; thirdly, by substitution of other foodgrains for rice, because in the matter of other grains, most Provinces of India are in surplus; and last but not least, by so rebuilding our industrial organisation, that we may get more money to buy any rice available.

On this question I may say—I am very glad to be able to announce—that Sind rice is being sold at Rs. 2 less from today. For a long time the idea of this Government was to press very strongl

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the need for control. "Export price for rice reduced Rs. 2 per maund from first January." This is the telegram of the Sind Government. This would make a considerable difference in the price of the rice. Considering that more than one half of our total supply is from Sind, this will make a very welcome difference. That is the first instalment I hope and trust, of that policy of price control which it is the object of the present Viceroy to inaugurate. There has been a Price Control Conference in Delhi where the surplus Provinces were represented. Now, honourable members are aware that I am proceeding by air, to Delhi on the 14th for the purpose of meeting the Government of India on certain post-war problems. One of the problems naturally will be that of the post-war situation with regard to food and such attempts as possible will be made on behalf of the Travancore Government for the purpose of getting this policy of price control implemented. What is happening today is absolutely chaotic. We pay 18 or 19 rupees here. We pay rupees 30 in Sind, 35 in Bahawalpur, 36 in the Punjab. We pay some other figure in Orissa, some other in Madras. What we have to do and what we have done is to proceed on one basis. This Government do not wish to make one single pie of profit out of the food situation; but we cannot afford to incur any loss and we have proceeded on that basis, because if the loss is calculated it would be more than this State could afford to pay. I shall give certain figures. Government have invested till the end of Vrischigom 1119 a sum of Rs. 650·17 lakhs on the purchase of foodgrains, against which the total receipts by sales amounted to Rs. 362·95 lakhs, leaving a balance of Rs. 287·22 lakhs to be accounted for on the first of Dhanu 1119.

On local paddy what we have done is that we have invested Rs. 90·68 lakhs and realised Rs. 53·34 lakhs. As I have already pointed out, the amount spent on imports from outside is Rs. 559·49 lakhs and the amount realised Rs. 309·61 lakhs, so that the total balance now to be realised stands at Rs. 287·22 lakhs. The value of local paddy with the Tahsildars is 42 lakhs of rupees and the value of imported commodities on 1-5-1119 is Rs. 250 lakhs. The cash with Tahsildars is 5 lakhs of rupees. Therefore, the total comes to Rs. 297·56 lakhs. Now, to this sum, has to be added the amount due to Government from purchasing agents. The value of such stock is about Rs. 15 lakhs. The net result will be that we have an asset of Rs. 303 lakhs. Thus the figures which we have indicated show the astronomic character that these transactions bear in the usual negotiations and transactions of the Government of Travancore. Until the crisis overcame us, we were dealing in thousands of rupees or tens of thousands of rupees. But now we have to gamble—I am using that expression deliberately—with crores, and unless we do that, there is no salvation for us.

Now, the position, therefore, is this: We cannot afford to lose and therefore we have to fix prices in such a manner that we have to pool all the resources and find out at what rate we can sell in order

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that we might not get a profit but not incur a loss. That is the procedure which this Government have undertaken and will undertake.

Closely connected with this problem is the problem of rationing. So far as I can say, and subject to what honourable members may have to say, the rationing in the City of Trivandrum has, on the whole, worked well. None of the reports that I hear are wholly adverse though at the same time I must say that there are complaints off and on. Rationing in Trivandrum Corporation was introduced on 1-5-1119. The population, as per the census conducted for the purpose is 143,000, and the units allowed for the whole City for the first fortnight are 243,927. Paddy, rice, wheat and bajra have been notified as rationed articles for the City. The value of one unit is 4 *nazhis* of food grains, of which 5/8 is given as rice, 2/8 as wheat and 1/8 as bajra. I may say that in view of the reports that I have now heard, these proportions will have to be modified. The preliminary work for introducing State-wide rationing is progressing satisfactorily. Rationing Officers have been appointed for the Nagercoil, Quilon, Alleppey and Kottayam Municipalities as in the case of Trivandrum City and the Tahsildars assisted by full time subordinates are functioning there. The rationed articles and the value of unit are the same in the City and mofussil.

Let us now come to what we have done within our State. For one year from the middle of Dhanu 1118 till the middle of Dhanu 1119 Government expected to purchase the quantity of one crore of paras of paddy on quota and excess bases from land-holders and cultivators in the State. Due to failure of crops and other reasons the anticipated quantity could not be purchased. For the year beginning from January 1944 it is estimated that a quantity of one and a quarter crores of paras of paddy can be purchased on behalf of Government. It is hoped that, as a consequence of the enhancement of the price of paddy to B.Re. 1-8-0, better arrangements for purchase, detection of illicit transport and secret hoardings and greater co-operation with the public, a substantial portion of this estimated figure will be collected. That is so far as grain stocks are concerned.

There is, apparently, some kind of discontent in certain quarters on account of the tapioca control order. I grant that Government were first reluctant to introduce any tapioca control because that commodity should circulate freely in the State of Travancore, it being the last staff of life and the last refuge of the poor man. But what has been the result? The Excise Commissioner's report from time to time pointed out that important and influential quarters were manufacturing daily in their houses large quantities of tapioca flour. Let me read the report: "The manufacture of tapioca flour into pearls which resemble sago is going on in every household. The party so manufacturing the stuff do not keep more than 10 lbs. of tapioca

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powder so as to avoid the penal provision of the law. The stuff so prepared is taken in quantities of one pound and less to places outside the State *viz.*, Cochin and British India, where it is in great demand. It is selling there nine times or eight times higher than the price in Travancore. Under the Government Notification dated 18-11-1942 the preparation and possession of tapioca flour up to a maximum of 10 lbs. were permissible. Hence the possession of tapioca flour up to 10 lbs. or the possession of sago up to 10 lbs. was not an offence, as the pearls manufactured from the permissible quantity of 10 lbs. was not meant for local consumption. Though, therefore, the quantity of stuff manufactured is below 10 lbs, it is an infringement of the spirit of the law. If this is what is being done by persons who ought to know better, in sheer defiance and in flagrant contravention of the elementary duties of patriotism, what is to be done? If these practices do not cease—we know certain names, but I do not propose to mention any names and if no other consideration than that of pity for our own people will not enable men to get only their legitimate profit from tapioca at this time, it will not be tapioca control, and whatever may be the risk and the difficulty, it will be stored and the entire monopoly will be with the Government. It will then mean that I shall have perhaps to quadruple the staff. I shall have to quadruple the staff of the Revenue Department. I am already going to double the staff of the Police and Excise Departments. Perhaps I will have to quadruple the staff of all the departments, and that wasteful, that extravagant, that needless expenditure, can be ascribed only to the lack of the patriotic impulse in certain quarters in Travancore. I trust it will not be necessary to go further than we have done, but that we could adopt any other expedient in the face of this daily smuggling, daily pilfering from the stomaches of the people and the daily misappropriation is a thing which cannot be gainsaid.

Incidentally there are two or three things that I have to mention. I was very pained to hear statements made on the floor of the House to-day that this or that Taluk committee did not work and that the co-operation of this or that member of the Legislature had not been sought and obtained. That, to my mind, is a certificate of unfitness on the part of the Government to discharge its duty and I regard those statements, if proved correct after verification, to be a legitimate vote of censure on the Head of the Administration and everybody connected with the administration of the State. I accept it in that spirit. If it is found that these Taluk Committees are not summoned and made to do some work at least once a month, the persons in charge of these committees will not be in their places. That is an absolute fact and I want this to be made as public as possible. If there are indications, in certain quarters, of personal prejudices between officers and members of the Legislature — I quite remember there are — and I have received complaints that so long as such and such a man is working in such and such a locality it would be *infra dig* on the part of member

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A or member B to attend that meeting of the Taluk or Kara Committee—it will not be possible to deal with such a state of things. All of us have to work with people of all sorts, and in all conditions and I trust honourable members, while blaming the servants of the public and Government servants for their non-co-operation will not give an example of non-co-operation among themselves. However it is from them that we should get complaints. But, what do we find? We find that there are certain visitors to the State from outside and certain philanthropic agencies who are working or purporting to work in our midst. They put forward certain contentions which might receive very great publicity shortly. But I shall deal with them in advance. I have been told, for instance, that the elementary duty of this Government is to give free meals not to a few selected people through the Vanchi Poor Fund and other associations of that kind in Trivandrum, Kottayam, Alleppey and elsewhere but to people throughout the State. When that statement was made to me, I referred the gentleman to our Administration Report. There are to-day 770,000 boys and girls attending educational institutions, and I asked the honourable member whether he wanted only school children to be fed or whether he would be content to have other children of the same age, whose parents were too poor even to send them to school, fed in the relief centres. It was then no doubt admitted somewhat reluctantly that the latter kind of children are also entitled to some consideration. Our literary population is about 47 per cent. and together with the number of children who are too poor to be sent to school we get about 15 lakhs of children to be fed every day. I then asked whether one or two annas a day might do for feeding each one of these children. That comes to about a lakh of rupees per day. That means 30 lakhs of rupees per month, and 360 lakhs of rupees per year. I, therefore, pointed out that if these 360 lakhs of rupees were to be spent on midday meals to the children, the other work of the administrative departments might have to be suspended for some time. But that was a matter in which we could not carry the argument much further. But, assuming that my calculations are wrong, and that many of these young people are very rich or well-to-do and could get enough funds to feed themselves, then, let us say that 2/3 of the young people in the State are so rich that they may not want free midday meals at the centres. Even then, the cost of feeding the rest of the children would come to about a crore and a half rupees. I hope that this argument will satisfy the honourable member who put me that question and made that suggestion, but I am not sure.

It was put to me that there was not enough of sugar and jaggery in the coastal areas. The people who made complaints in this regard have come here for an expert decision. Apparently some deputations approached those people and said :—"What, this Government is making a lot of money out of the Travancore Sugars and

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Chemicals but yet it does not supply enough sugar and jaggery." It was also stated that our tapioca control was really the best way of starving the people of the country, because the Government apparently wanted to corner tapioca for the purpose of manufacturing tapioca starch and flour and supplying them to the mills in Bombay. However it was necessary on the part of the Government to control to a certain extent the dealings in tapioca. The abovesaid criticisms will be nullified if the Taluk and the District Committees could carry on with their work amicably. I am making an appeal to the members of this honourable House and through them to the public throughout the State to co-operate in this matter with the members of such committees in order to make this scheme a success. Before I pass on to the next subject there is one other aspect which I must point out here. Honourable members must realise that the work that a Government servant has to perform to-day is very different from that for which he was recruited and for which he has been trained. Whether a Secretariat Clerk or even a Tahsildar or an Excise subordinate or a Police subordinate, almost everyone of these persons is now to be engaged in the work of procurement of rice, the movement of rice, the persuasion or the coercion to be utilised for the purpose of getting rice from recalcitrant quarters. I must now place on record my personal sense of deep gratitude and thankfulness to the servants of the several branches of the public service who have, at a time of great stress and stringency, done good work in addition to their normal duties and made this experiment the little success that it has been. What success has attended us has been stated by persons who have visited other Provinces and States. It is not for us to give a certificate to ourselves. But I believe it is generally conceded that imperfect as it is, full of scope for improvement as there is, the Travancore scheme of rationing, collection and distribution has saved Travancore from some of the calamitous consequences which a shortage of foodstuffs has entailed elsewhere. That is all that I have to say on the general food situation.

With regard to the grow more food campaign two or three things have to be stated. Firstly, I should again draw the attention of the honourable members of this House to what the representative of the Chinese Agricultural Commission recently stated. He said that the Government of China kept a reserve of 6 per cent of the total production of wheat and rice in the country. This stock was used by Government to control market prices by releasing the grain wherever prices showed a tendency to rise. I have written to the representative regarding the aims of Government on this matter. The point is that the average yield of rice per acre in China is 1,980 lbs. and of wheat 1,000 lbs., about $2\frac{1}{2}$ times the yield in India. This was attributed by the Head of the Chinese Agricultural Mission, which is now in India, mainly to the use of manure and the very careful conservation of the manure by the Chinese peasant. That is why we are and have been so anxious to start the manufacture of chemicals and fertilisers as soon as possible, and, as honourable members know, a company has been recently

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registered. The Government of Travancore have agreed to contribute 50 per cent of the shares and I am glad to say that although at first the response from the State was not satisfactory a great deal of demand came from the State towards the period of closing of the call for shares.

We have also been fairly successful in our attempts to deal with the coir trade, and the Government of India have now agreed to deal exclusively with the Governments of Travancore and Cochin for their coir requirements. In other words, the Government of India will not place their orders with private individuals or with anybody in India. 90 per cent of the whole of the requirements of the Government of India are given to Travancore and Cochin, and a committee has been appointed which will duly carry out all the necessary arrangements in connection with the manufacture and supply to the Government of India of all coir requirements. Cochin and Travancore are acting hand in hand in this matter and I am glad to say that the orders that have been given in pursuance of this arrangement are most encouraging.

Next I wish to deal with a question that has been raised more than once. That is, the throwing open of certain localities for cultivation. The policy of the Government has been indicated more than once in this connection. The Government cannot afford to deplete their forest resources, not only now but for the next fifteen or twenty years—which will be the source of great wealth for us, not only in the sale of timber as such or of soft wood as such, but in the various industrial undertakings, *viz.*, plywood, plastics, etc., with which this Government is charged.

Quite apart from that, this Government have got two ideas in view *viz.*, the allotment of swamps and reed areas on the one hand and the setting apart of the grassy areas on the other, for food production. The results are that out of the 10,404 acres that have been surveyed including swamps, grass areas in plains and on the hills, 5,752 acres have been occupied. All the 2,184 acres of regular taungya regeneration areas surveyed have been occupied. Therefore, the total area surveyed is 12,588 acres of which 7,936 acres are in occupation. The remaining unoccupied area is 4,000 acres. Owing to a variety of causes—early rains, want of seeds, failure of lessees, etc.—the full occupied area was not cultivated. It is estimated that about 4,000 acres were actually cultivated. The average yield of paddy from swamps may be assessed at 35 paras per acre, that from reed areas at 60 paras per acre, that from grass areas on the hills at 25 paras and the yield of tapioca from grass areas in the plains at about a ton per acre. Thus it will be seen that 3,100 acres of grassy areas and 821 acres of swamps remain unallotted on the hills. It is proposed to extend the lease period of such lands from 3 years to 7 years with the specific proviso that land liable to erosion should be contour-bunded by the lessee.

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Tapioca, wheat, potatoes, temperate vegetables, soya beans and rice can be successfully grown in such areas. The total extent of grass land between 2,000 and 4,000 feet available in the cardamom hills is estimated at no less than one lakh of acres. The colonisation of these grassy areas by co-operative effort was formulated by Government in 1942. Such colonisation schemes will have to be started on an extensive scale as soon as the war ends and the demobilised soldiers return to their native lands. Finally, it should be said that the leases of swampy and grassy areas which will be presently given to a large extent will be only on a temporary basis, but, over and above these schemes, the Government of Travancore have been and are forced to consider long-term schemes. Lest we should not suffer from shortage, every bit of land that can be reclaimed from the sea or backwater, every bit of land that can be reclaimed without jeopardy to the ultimate interests of the State, as in the case of forests, will have to be reclaimed. To say all this is simple, but the magnitude and the complexity of the problem have to be grasped. The Government are thinking of the Kayamkulam and the Vembanad areas. Reclamation of such areas means the provision of navigable canals or channels and the construction of bridges which are not likely to be submerged or destroyed by floods in these canals or channels. It will also entail the building of ridges, to prevent the possibility—to a larger or a smaller extent—of inundation of the low-lying tracts in the hinterland. It will also mean the disposal of silt in a manner which may ultimately prove prejudicial. It may also affect the harbours of Cochin and Alleppey by reason of the great changes which are sometimes produced by these vast engineering schemes. The Government, therefore, cannot embark on such schemes without getting the best possible advice. The only country in the world which has taken steps in this direction is Holland which has been familiar with this problem for the last three hundred years. But even in Holland, it will be remembered that the first reclamation led to a complete submersion of valuable property by the breaking of the Zuider Zee. Therefore, the question has to be tackled with the best possible expert advice and a very careful experimentation. But this House may be sure that that experiment will be taken up. The money involved in the scheme runs to crores and not lakhs, and steps will have to be taken to make it possible for the State to make a ten or a twenty year programme with the necessary provision for sinking fund and so forth in respect of public loans to be floated for the purpose. I have no doubt that the response will be immediate and swift, but we must first set our house in order before we start on such schemes.

Therefore, the problems before us are firstly of an immediate character and secondly of a long-term character, but to disassociate or divorce the long-term plans from the short-term problems is not the policy of this Government, because it is much better to proceed in the direction of the long-range problem step by step along with the solution of short-term policies. In other words, we must get all the rice

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President]

that is available from the hoarders of the rice within the State. Secondly, we must prevent any dissipation of our tapioca and our vegetable resources either from unpatriotic or other motives. Thirdly, we must extend the areas of cultivation forthwith and intensify the method of cultivation. We must exercise the force of organised and regimented public opinion so that it might impinge itself upon the public opinion of the rest of India and upon the Government of India, in order that they might realise that our needs are great and urgent. Our needs are really as great as those of Bengal. It is possible for Bengal to say to-day that the *amman* crop in Bengal is according to one account 160 per cent. of the normal crop and according to another account—equally authentic—125 per cent. According to the third account it is 90 per cent. or 125 per cent. of last year's crop. Such are the vagaries of statistics even in go-ahead Bengal. But assuming it is neither 90 nor 160 per cent, it is not less than 50 per cent. We produce about 40 per cent of our foodgrains, and with these variegated statistics published by the Government of Bengal—varying nearly from 90 to 160 per cent—it was possible for His Excellency the Governor of Bengal the day before yesterday to say that whatever else has been happening, the spectre of famine has been exercised from Bengal. God grant that it may be so. But we cannot say so as yet. The Government of India are alive to the importance of the problem of food supplies in Travancore and Cochin, and unless they realise from day to day and from hour to hour that we grow only 40 to 50 per cent of our foodgrains and that we must starve unless the rice is given in some palatable form, the issue is a concomitant disaster. I feel sure that the Government of India will realise that and will help us in the future as they helped us in the past.

Incidentally, I may say that the Government of India have now agreed directly to supply the tea and rubber estates with whatever grain is needed by them. We have been asked to give the tea and rubber estates a certain amount of rice, wheat and millets. The tea and rubber estates, like all the rest of us, are anxious to get more rice and less in the way of other grains. I would, with all possible respect, point out to the holders of tea and rubber estates that their coolies come mainly from the plains of the Madras Presidency, that the people of the Madras Presidency are more accustomed to eat ragi and *cumbu* and jowar and millets than the people of Travancore and that to expect, as the University students of Travancore expect, that they should be given more rice than the rest of the people in Travancore is not reasonable. But I am absolutely certain that the representative of the tea and rubber estates will not take such a short-sighted view and that he will realise that there are two great dangers in regard to these estates. Firstly, the estates get rations much greater in quantity than the rest in Travancore. It is not good either for the estate or for the State as a whole. Secondly, if the estates get the grains in different proportions from the rest of the people in the State, it is not going to be

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of any benefit to either. So then let us share the burden alike. Travail and tribulation are perhaps our lot, but let us have the consolation of saying that the rich and the poor, north and the south, estate-holder and the labourer in the plains, all share the same ration to the same extent and in the same spirit to the glory of the country.

DEMANDS FOR SUPPLEMENTARY GRANTS.

DEMAND IV—FORESTS.

RAO BAHADUR T. V. VENKATESWARA AYYAR: Sir, I rise to move for a supplementary grant of Rs 4,200 for meeting the following items :

		Rs.
1.	Providing electric connection to Pallam Plant ...	2,000
2.	Shifting the ascu treatment plant to Shencotta ...	700
3.	The construction of a shed for housing the treatment plant, engine, etc., at Shencotta ...	1,500

The machinery at Pallom has so long been working on petrol. Now petrol is more difficult to obtain and electric current is available close by. It is proposed to shift from the petrol driven engine to electric current motor and hence a provision of Rs. 2,000 is required for the purpose. The advantage is that one department of Government would be paying another Department for the current used and no money will be spent on petrol. In the case of a shed for housing the treatment plant, engine, etc., at Shencotta, there has been only a temporary shed so far. That shed is on the point of collapse. Now we have decided to continue the treatment of poles according to the ascu method. We want to house the machinery in a permanent building. That is the reason for the Demand of Rs. 1,500. The existing plant at Shencotta is beyond the capacity of the present calls for purposes of work and therefore a plant that is lying idle at Trivandrum is proposed to be shifted to Shencotta and it has to be housed within a shed.

MR. M. R. NARAYANA PILLAI: May I know from the member whether there was any reason why the plant was originally installed at Pallom.

RAO BAHADUR T. V. VENKATESWARA AYYAR: Because there was facility of communication by water from various plantations from which poles had to be taken over to a central place for treating purposes. In that way Pallom was found to be a very convenient place.

PRESIDENT: When was the plant installed at Pallom?

RAO BAHADUR T. V. VENKATESWARA AYYAR: Somewhere about 1114.

MR. N. NARAYANA KURUP: Sir, I oppose the passing of the Demand.

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